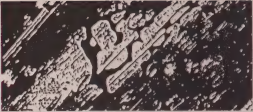
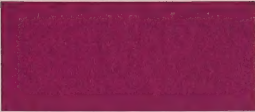




Lonely?
Confused?
Burned Out?
Shamed?

**Hope
Happens**





Hope Happens Here!

You are invited to join with thousands of other Christians who have found a safe and supportive network for their personal recovery.

If you care about integrating recovery with biblical principles, if you want to keep up-to-date on the latest resources for Christian recovery, then the National Association for Christian Recovery may be just what you are looking for.

Join today and become a part of a nurturing and well-informed network for personal recovery.



Members of the National Association for Christian Recovery receive:

- ☐ Four quarterly issues of STEPS Magazine with features, columns, humor and much more from a distinctively Christian point of view.
- ☐ The quarterly NACR newsletter with the latest regional and national news on support groups, workshops and conferences.
- ☐ Information about NACR sponsored training programs.
- ☐ Discounts at all NACR national and regional conferences and workshops
- ☐ Access to NACR networking opportunities in your local area.
- ☐ A copy of the *NACR Directory of Recovery Resources* to be published annually..

PLUS . . .

- ☐ You are helping to build a national network that understands both 'Christian' and 'recovery'. Join with us today!

Yes!

☐ **I want to join the National Association for Christian Recovery\$20.00**
[Canadian members add an additional \$10, Other non-US members add an additional \$20.
Please draw US funds on a US bank or send an international money order].

☐ **Make it two years!\$38.00**
[Canadian members add an additional \$20, Other non-US members add an additional \$40.]

Name: _____ Organization (if any) _____

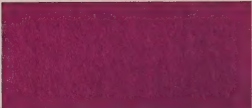
Address: _____ Denomination: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

This is my: ☐ home address ☐ work address Occupation: _____

Prices good through 12/31/93.

Detach and mail with your check to NACR, P.O. Box 11095, Whittier, CA 90603



Recovery is a difficult journey under any circumstances. But it is impossible to do alone.

Alone, we lose hope easily. Together, however, our hope can be nurtured by the experience and faith of others. The National Association for Christian Recovery came into existence because hope can happen in new and wonderful ways when we share the journey of recovery together.

It's not always easy to find Christians who understand the recovery journey. We invite you to take advantage of this opportunity to connect with other Christians who share a similar journey. We need each other.

Join with us and experience the hope that comes from fellowship in recovery.

Carmen Renee Berry
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



What people are saying about the NACR:

"The NACR is a safe place for Christians in recovery. Don't miss this opportunity to network with other people struggling to be distinctively Christian about their healing journeys!"

—Steve Arterburn

"The NACR is an answer to prayer! It's commitment to educating, equipping and encouraging Christians in the recovery process has been life changing for many. I believe in the NACR's effort to balance scriptural principles with sound recovery tools. It leads to a more intimate, authentic relationship with God."

—Jan Frank

"Membership in the NACR will be particularly helpful for people from dysfunctional families who are struggling with distorted images of God. Join, you'll be glad you did!"

—Sandra Wilson

"The NACR is founded on a commitment to distinctively biblical principles and it also understands recovery. That's a great combination."

—Juanita Ryan

"Membership in the NACR will connect you with some of the most loving and visionary people in the church today. The breadth and depth of wisdom and honesty about effective recovery found in NACR publications is unmatched anywhere!"

—Fr. Jack McGinnis

NACR NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Jim Gaffney, Mariner's Church

Ron Halvorson, Recovery Publications

Susan Jurich, Recovery Northwest

Jack McGinnis, The Meadows

Daryl Quick, Clackamas Family Counseling

Kent Rhodes, Affinity Resources

Juanita Ryan, Therapist

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Jeffrey VanVonderen, Damascus Inc.

Karen Webster, Christian Recovery

Alliance of New England

Sandra Wilson, Psychologist

The NACR is a ministry of
The Recovery Partnership
P.O. Box 11095, Whittier, CA 90603

**CLERGY
BURNOUT?
CLERGY
STRESS?
CLERGY
ANXIETY?
CLERGY
LONELINESS?**

*You can make a difference
by taking care of yourself!*



*The National Association
for Christian Recovery
National Clergy Network*



Ministry is one of the most demanding of professions. Opportunities for excess stress burn-out are everywhere. Risk of catastrophic failure is not uncommon. We know. We have been there. It's time for those of us in ministry to start taking better care of ourselves. As part of that process, we invite you to become a member of the National Clergy Network of the National Association for Christian Recovery.

Your membership will link you with other clergy who are on the recovery journey and who understand the unique frustrations and demands of recovery for clergypersons.

The Clergy Network will allow you to participate in training programs, information sharing and support opportunities designed with your unique needs in mind.



**As a Member of the NACR's
Clergy Network you will receive:**

■ **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Access to NACR sponsored training programs, especially designed for recovery-oriented clergy.

■ **DISCOUNTS**

Discounts at all NACR national and regional conferences.

■ **NACR DIRECTORY OF
RECOVERY RESOURCES**

A listing in the annual NACR Directory of Recovery Resources to be distributed to all NACR members.

■ **STEPS MAGAZINE**

Four quarterly issues of STEPS Magazine with features, columns, humor and much more from a distinctively Christian point of view.

■ **NACRNEWS**

Quarterly issues of the NACRNEWS to keep you up-to-date on developments in the NACR network.

■ **PLUS . . .**

You are helping to build a national network that understands both 'Christian' and 'recovery.'
Join us today!!

Yes!

- ☐ I want to join the NACR's Clergy Network\$60.00
- ☐ Please send me 50 flyers about general membership in the NACR to distribute
to members of my congregation.FREE
- ☐ Please send me information about advertising space
in the NACR Directory of Recovery ResourcesFREE

Name _____ Denomination: _____

Church Name: _____ Church Phone: _____

Church Address: _____ Church City/State/Zip _____

Prices good through 12/31/93

Detach and mail with your check to NACR, P.O. Box 11095, Whittier, CA 90603

Dear colleagues:

Balancing the demands of our public roles with a personal life can be tricky business. You don't have to go further than the morning paper to see that many clergy have been unable to navigate the complex and confusing demands of life in ministry.

We believe it's time to start taking better care of ourselves. The Clergy Network of the NACR is designed and led by people who understand the rigors of recovery for ministers. We know about the secret life syndrome, and the shame it brings. We understand about preaching in pain and loneliness.

We know that no quick fix or new program will solve our problems effortlessly or painlessly. But we have come to believe that recovery is possible, that we can live healthy, balanced, and authentic lives. It's impossible to do this alone, however. Fellowship in recovery is essential for the journey.

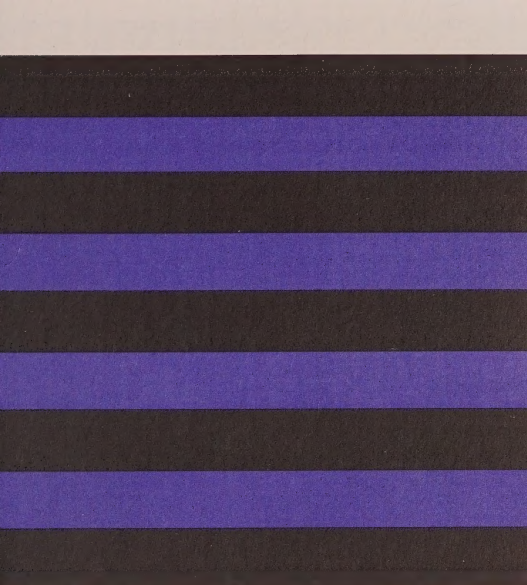
We invite you, therefore, to join with us by becoming a member of the NACR's network of pastors, chaplains and other ministry professionals in recovery. Together we can make a difference!

Rev. Stephen Smith

CHAIRPERSON

NATIONAL CLERGY NETWORK ADVISORY BOARD

Melinda Fish, Church of the Risen Savior, Trafford, PA
Jim Gaffney, Mariner's Church, Newport Beach, CA
Gerardo de Jesus, Our Friends House, Whittier, CA
Alexander LaBrecque, Evangelica, Pasadena, CA
Diana Loomis, Bethel United Methodist, Glencoe, MO
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Hartley Webster, Christian Recovery Alliance of New
England, Burlington, MA
Dale Wolery, North Community Church, Brea, CA
Carmen Renee Berry, Executive Director, NACR

The top half of the page features a decorative header consisting of a series of horizontal stripes. The stripes alternate between a dark blue or black color and a lighter blue color. There are five pairs of these stripes, creating a total of ten distinct horizontal bands.

The National Association for Christian Recovery
is a ministry of The Recovery Partnership
P.O. Box 11095 Whittier, CA 90603
Voice: 310-697-6201 Fax: 310-694-6930

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UNITED STATES



MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIAN RECOVERY - SPRING 1981

RECOVERING FROM SHAME

lack of affection, consultation, and even contempt and ridicule are not uncommon features of family life. Any of those experi-

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☐ Chemical Dependency ☐ Eating Disorders ☐ Other

☐ **YES!** Please send me additional information about STEPS and the National Association for Christian Recovery.

❧ JUNE 12 ❧

*The great thing about getting
older is that you don't lose all the
other ages you've been.*

MADELEINE L'ENGLE



✧ JUNE 11 ✧

*God's gifts put man's
best dreams to shame.*

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor
the human heart conceived, what God
has prepared for those who love him.*

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 NRSV



YOU ARE INVITED TO STEPS '95



P.O. Box 11095
Whittier, CA 90603
Voice: 310-697-6201
Fax: 310-694-6930

a ministry of
Christian Recovery International

Non-profit org.
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10546 reg6
Rev. Marge Ragona
911G Valley Avenue
Birmingham AL 35209

- 4:00PM Registration
Swissôtel,
4th Floor Lobby
- 6:00-7:00PM Welcome Reception
Exhibit Area
- 7:00-9:00PM Grand Ballroom

Home Is Where You Are



Music and Narrative
by Keith Miller
and Tommy and
Heather Pierce
of "Step Three"

ALL OF THIS PLUS:

- 1. TABLE TALK.** Rich Buhler will be doing a live broadcast of his national radio call-in show "Table Talk" from the conference via WEZE radio.
- 2. SUPPORT GROUPS.** When you need a safe place to share what you are experiencing at the conference, plan on taking part in one of the many support groups available.
- 3. EXHIBIT HALL.** Dozens of ministries and organizations of interest to Christians in recovery!
- 4. PLAYSHOPS.** Don't just do the WORKshops! Join us in the adult playroom for PLAYshops by Olga Lauder milk on "Trauma Drama", Holly VanVonderen on "Dramatics for your Inner Child" and Linda Miller on "Lighten Up!"
- 5. NACR SILENT AUCTION.** Dozens of donated items will go to the highest bidder! Proceeds go to the NACR. A lot of fun!
- 6. DOCTOR OF MINISTRY COURSE.** A 2 week course by Dr. Dale Ryan and Dr. Ray Anderson is offered by Fuller Seminary in connection with this conference. For info: 818-584-5200.
- 7. CONFIDENT KIDS TRAINING.** A 1 day seminar will be held on Wed., July 26. For more info call: 310-690-9701

10:00 AM - Noon

WORKSHOPS

1:45-3:15

3:30-5:00

7:00-9:00PM

WELCOME

Dale Wolery,
Executive
Director,
NACR



Addictions

Body Work

Families in
Recovery

Inner Work

Sexuality in
RecoveryRecovery from
TraumaTheology &
RecoveryHealthy
LivingLeadership
TrainingClergy
NetworkMental Health
Network

Karen
Webster
NE Regional
Board
Chairperson

David
Wilkinson,
Conference
Director



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Carmen
Renee Berry
on
"Making
Room for
Joy"



The 12 Steps as a
Spiritual Discipline
Ron Halvorson

Restoring Relationship with
Your Body
Susan Latta & Kate O'Sullivan

Couples Can Fight Fair
in Recovery
Jim Lawrence

An Interactive Discussion of
Pain and Joy Virginia &
Joseph Schneider

Breaking the Spiritual
Bonds of Sexual Addiction
Ted Roberts

Building an Ongoing
Divorce Recovery Ministry
Jim Smoke

Theological Resistance to
Recovery
Dale Ryan

Personality Plus
Karen O'Conner

How Healing Happens
Bill Morris

Spiritual Health: Keeping
Some for Yourself
Jeff VanVonderen

Counseling & Body Work
Valerie Macklin

Winning at Work Without
Losing at Love
Steve Arterburn

Healing
Movement
Eleanor Orr

Healthy Relationships
Through Generational
Study Patricia Doane

Healing My Childhood
Image of God
Fr. Jack McGinnis

One Man's Struggle with
Pornography & Sex
Addiction Gene McConnell

MK's In Recovery: From
Thorns to Thriving
Sharon Koon

The Dynamic of Religious
Correctness
Donald Sloat

The Faces of Rage
Mike O'Neil

Making Ministry from
Misery
Yvonne Martinez

Who Shuffled the Script of
My Life?
Wayne Coggins

Forming a Therapeutic
Alliance
Ray Pendleton

PLENARY SESSION

John Townsend
on
"When Recovery
Loses It's Joy"



Original Dramatic
Presentations by
Carol Anderson &
Jim Shores of
"Acts of Renewal"

9-10:30

10:45-12:15 WORKSHOPS

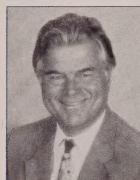
1:45-3:15

3:30-5:00

7-9PM

PLENARY SESSION

Dr. Ralph Earle
on
"Jekyll & Hyde Christianity"

**NACR MEMBER MEETING**

Join the Advisory Board in shaping the future of the NACR. Meet with other NACR members from your area. We need your input about the future of the NACR!

Addictions	Alcoholism and the Elderly Frank Tanney Rocks	Intervention: helping someone who doesn't want help Bruce Frens
Body Work	Sexual Trauma Survivors: Strategies for Healing Body, Mind & Spirit Carolyn Braddock	
Families in Recovery	The Feelings of Parenting Wendy Wilkinson	Family Secrets Julie Mask
Inner Work	Illusions of Control Sandy Wilson	Response-Able Worship Wendy Corrick
Sexuality in Recovery	Sex, Love & Dating: Romance in Recovery Rick Fraser	Breaking the Cycles of Sexual Addiction Don Crossland
Recovery from Trauma	Restoring Trust Rudy & Claire Fuentes	Becoming a Feeling Adult Marilyn Murray
Healthy Living	Stage Three Recovery Stephen Smith	Dollars and Sense John and Virginia Frederick
Theology & Recovery	Is Our Humanity Unacceptable to God? Alex LaBrecque	Whatever Happened to Shame? Paul Fitzgerald
Leadership Training	Integrating Recovery With the Local Church Jim Gaffney	Support Groups for Sexual Abuse Survivors Bill Mattingly
Clergy Network	Is Your Church Designed for Joy? Dale Wolery	How to Restore Fallen Ministers Tom Pedigo
Mental Health Network	Untangling the World of Eating Disorders Don Durham	Helping Children Cope with Loss Barbara Schiller

JUST PLAIN FUN NIGHT!

Several fun activities are planned such as historical tours and trips to the Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Come enjoy and explore life in beautiful and historic Boston, MA. Don't miss it!

9-10:30AM

WORKSHOPS

10:45-12:15

1:45-3:15

3:30-5:00

7-11 PM

PLENARY SESSION

Rich Buhler
on
"Joy with a Whole Heart"



Addictions	Love Gone Wrong Thomas Whiteman	Recovery from Food Addictions Jerry and Sandra Clark
Body Work	Massage, Touch and Inner Healing Cheryl Fuller	A Guide to Joy & Wholeness: Christian Relaxation Activities Cathy McKinney
Families in Recovery	Parenting With the Power of Prayer Bill & Pam Lehtonen	Honoring the Abusive Parent Susan Kats
Inner Work	Termites in Your Troth Stephen Lortz	Journal Writing in Recovery Juanita Ryan
Sexuality in Recovery	Couples in Sexual Addiction Recovery Mark Laaser	
Recovery from Trauma	Walking In Your Land of Promise Julie Christopher	A Way Out for Men Who Batter Daniel Keller
Healthy Living	Shame Off Me Tom Sharp	Professionals: the Recovering Healer James Manganello
Theology & Recovery	Freedom from Shame Curtis Levang	Joy Amid Suffering Curtis and Sandra Lovelace
Leadership Training	The Role of Support Groups in Healing Joseph Lambardi	A Culture of Safety Kent Rhodes
Clergy Network	Dealing with the Past: The Renewing of the Mind Pablo Polischuck	The 12 Steps and the Process of Sanctification Dale McClesky
Mental Health Professionals	Fixing Potholes on the Road to Recovery Eric Scalize	Art and Self-Care Susan Jurich

WORSHIP SERVICE

A special time of worship, communion, meditation and celebration including music led by Mark Fee

OPTIONAL SPECIAL EVENT

Join us for an Authentic New England Lobster Clambake, live entertainment by *The Parable Players* and a Tour of the World Famous New England Aquarium. Please check the appropriate box on the registration form if you wish to join us!



REGISTRATION FORM

HOTEL INFORMATION

The Swissôtel at One Av. de Lafayette is 10 minutes away from the Logan Airport. Transportation is available from the airport by taxi or subway. Reduced rates of \$99 (50% of regular rates) are available on a limited basis so please call early to secure your reservations. Rates are effective before and after the conference for those wishing to extend their stay in Boston. Call the hotel directly at 800-621-9200 and inform the registration department that you will be attending STEPS'95.

AIRFARE DISCOUNTS

A 5% discount off the lowest applicable airfares is available. Call Travelcom at 800-475-4243 and mention the NACR.

CONFERENCE TAPES

For a catalog of available tapes write: NACR, PO Box 11095, Whittier, CA 90603.

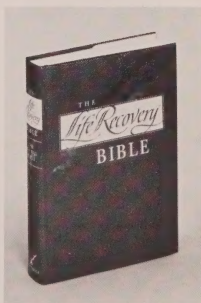
CEU Credits

CEU approval for Social Workers, Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Counselors,

Nurses and Licensed Marriage & Family Therapists can be arranged. Please contact Hope Psychological Services for details: 60 Mall Road #106, Burlington, MA 01803, 617-272-4011.

Life Recovery Bible

All full-time registrants will receive a free copy of the Life Recovery Bible!



1 Please send one form for each registrant. Photocopied forms may be used.
Name (Please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

This address is: ☐ residence ☐ work

2 NACR MEMBERSHIP ☐ \$30.00

NATIONAL CLERGY NETWORK ☐ \$60.00

PROFESSIONAL MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK ☐ \$70.00

Join now and receive the discounted member rates for conference registration!

3 Check the kind(s) of registration(s) you desire.

	NACR	NON-
	MEMBERS	MEMBERS

FULL TIME REGISTRATIONS (includes copy of Recovery Bible)

Wed/Thurs/Fri/Saturday/(Postmarked by 7/7/95) ☐ \$145.00 .. ☐ \$160.00

Wed/Thurs/Fri/Saturday/(On-site registration) ☐ \$170.00 .. ☐ \$185.00

TWO DAY REGISTRATIONS

Thursday/Friday ☐ \$115.00 .. ☐ \$125.00

Thursday/Saturday ☐ \$115.00 .. ☐ \$125.00

Friday/Saturday ☐ \$115.00 .. ☐ \$125.00

ONE DAY REGISTRATIONS

Wednesday only ☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$30.00

Thursday only ☐ \$65.00 ☐ \$75.00

Friday only ☐ \$65.00 ☐ \$75.00

Saturday only ☐ \$65.00 ☐ \$75.00

SATURDAY NIGHT Dinner and Aquarium Tour ☐ \$42.00

4 Indicate the total payment enclosed with this form: _____

5 Select Payment Method:
•CREDIT CARD: Fax this form to 310-694-4930 or mail.

Number: _____

Expiration date: _____ Check: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Signature: _____

•CHECK: Mail this form with your check to:
NACR/STEPS '95
P.O. Box 11095
Whittier, CA 90603

REFUND POLICY: All registration fees are refundable in full when requests for cancellations are submitted in writing and postmarked by June 1, 1995. When requests are submitted in writing and postmarked after June 1, 1995 but before July 15, 1995, refunds are available minus a \$40 processing fee. No refunds are available when postmarked after July 15, 1995. This policy applies to all types of registration for this conference.

Co-sponsors

- Fresh Start
- Life Recovery Bible
- Rapha Hospital
Treatment Centers
- Remuda Ranch
- Baptist Sunday
School Board

*The National Association for Christian Recovery &
the North East Regional Advisory Board of the NACR
Invite You to Attend*

STEPS '95



*Joy and
the Healing
Journey*

**A National Conference for
Christians in Recovery**

July 26-29, 1995

Boston, Massachusetts

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VicePresident

Dale Wolery
Executive Director
NACR

Linda Kondracki
Executive Director
Confident Kids

Betsy Read
Executive Director
National Service Center

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Home of
The National
Association for
Christian Recovery
&
Confident Kids



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Whittier, CA 90603

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721 W. Whittier Blvd. #H
La Habra, CA 90631

Voice:
310-697-6201
Fax:
310-694-6930

December 16, 1994

Rev. Marge Ragona
911g Valley Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35209

Dear Rev. Ragona,

Thank you for your interest in the National Association for Christian Recovery. The NACR exists because we are convinced that the Christian faith is a rich resource for people in the recovery process. If you are interested in growing as a Christian during recovery, then the NACR was designed with your needs in mind.

As requested, information about the National Clergy Network is enclosed. You will receive all the benefits of a general membership plus a listing in the Directory of Recovery Resources and access to NACR sponsored training programs, especially designed for the recovery-oriented Christian pastor.

A sample copy of *STEPS Magazine*, a brief history of the development of the NACR, and a resources sheet are enclosed. Perhaps knowing a little more about the NACR will help in the decision-making process.

Our prayer is that you will join with approximately 2700 other Christians world-wide who have discovered that **HOPE HAPPENS HERE!** And may God bless you as you move toward a healthier and more Christ-like style of life.

Sincerely,

Betsy C. Read
Executive Director
National Service Center

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for CHRISTIAN RECOVERY

WHAT IS THE NACR? The NACR is a membership organization comprised of Christians who are struggling to integrate their faith with their personal recovery. The purpose of the NACR is to encourage personal recovery through 1). the development of a network of relationships among Christians in recovery from diverse backgrounds, 2). development and distribution of distinctively Christian resources, and 3). the provision of training and leadership development services.

WHEN DID THE NACR BEGIN? The NACR was established in 1990 as a ministry of The Recovery Partnership (now called Christian Recovery International), the first of its family of ministries. The first issue of *STEPS*, the quarterly magazine of the NACR, was published in July of 1990. The first national conference, *STEPS '91*, was held in August of 1991. The NACR has grown rapidly in a short period of time and now represents a wide cross-section of denominational backgrounds (conservative, mainstream, and liberal) and a rich diversity of recovery journeys.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR NACR MEMBERSHIP? Anyone is welcome as a general NACR member who identifies himself or herself as a Christian who is involved in a personal recovery process.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF NACR MEMBERSHIP?

- * FOUR quarterly issues of *STEPS* Magazine
- * FOUR quarterly issues of *NACRNEWS* with the latest regional and national news on support groups, workshops, and conferences
- * INFORMATION about NACR sponsored training programs
- * DISCOUNTS at all NACR national and regional conferences and workshops
- * ACCESS to NACR networking opportunities in your local area
- * A COPY of the *NACR Directory of Recovery Resources* (to be published annually)

PLUS. . .

You are helping to build a national network that understands both "Christian" and "recovery".

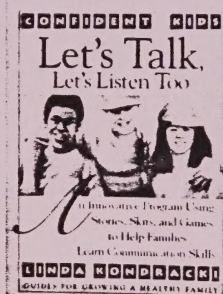


Life Recovery Guides, Dale and Juanita Ryan, 16 Bible study guides \$72.00 Individual Titles

Recovery from Addiction	\$5.00
Recovery from Abuse	\$5.00
Recovery from Spiritual Abuse	\$5.00
Recovery from Distorted Images of God	\$5.00
Recovery from Workaholism	\$5.00
Recovery from Shame	\$5.00
Recovery from Codependency	\$5.00
Recovery from Distorted Images of Self	\$5.00
Recovery from Fear	\$5.00
Recovery from Bitterness	\$5.00
Recovery: A Life Long Journey	\$5.00
Recovery from Guilt	\$5.00
Recovery from Depression	\$5.00
Recovery from Broken Relationships	\$5.00
Recovery from Loss	\$5.00
Recovery from Family Dysfunctions	\$5.00

CONFIDENT KIDS MATERIALS

Beginning a Support Group for Elementary Age Children (24pgs)	\$4.00
Confident Kids, Program Administrators Guide	\$145.00
Facilitator's Lesson Plan Book (must have Administrator's Guide) ..	\$35.00
Start Up Package (Program Ad. Guide + Lesson Plan Books)	\$220.00
Help for Hurting Children: A Self-study Course (6 audio tapes)	\$60.00
I Always, Always Have Choices, Linda Kondracki	\$10.00
All My Feelings Are Okay, Linda Kondracki	\$10.00
Let's Talk, Let's Listen Too, Linda Kondracki	\$10.00
Feelings Faces Poster (Large, 18" x 24") with activity guide	\$8.00
Feelings Faces Poster, (Small, 8.5" x 11")	\$6.00
Help for Hurting Teens Manual	\$35.00
Teen Support Group Workbook: HELPS	\$8.00
Teen Support Group Workbook: STEPS	\$8.00



Check here and
receive a **FREE** copy of
Rooted in God's Love by
Dale and Juanita Ryan with
your purchase of \$20.00 or
more!

Order Form

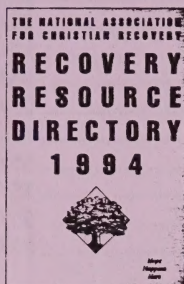
Make checks to NACR, P.O.Box 11095, Whittier, CA
90603. International orders: payment must be an
international money order in US dollars or a check
drawn on a US bank in US dollars.

Name _____
Organization Name (if any) _____
Mailing Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____
Denomination (if clergy) _____

Subtotal
Shipping (8% of subtotal, 23% for international, \$1 min)
Sales Tax (8.25% CA & 8.2% WA residents only)
Total Enclosed

Check the items you wish to purchase and return this entire page with your order. Thanks.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE NACR



DIRECTORY

- _____ 1994 Directory of Recovery Resources **SOLD OUT** \$10.00
 _____ 1995 Directory will be mailed
 to NACR members in Jan., 1995

AUDIO TAPES

- _____ The Truth Will Set You Free, Steve Arterburn \$6.50
 _____ Recovery from Distorted Images of God, Juanita Ryan \$6.50
 _____ When Helping You Is Hurting Me, Carmen Renee Berry \$6.50
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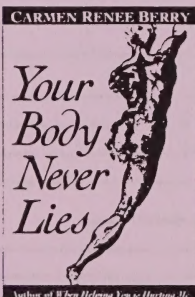
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THE MAGAZINE OF HOPE & HEALING FOR CHRISTIANS IN RECOVERY

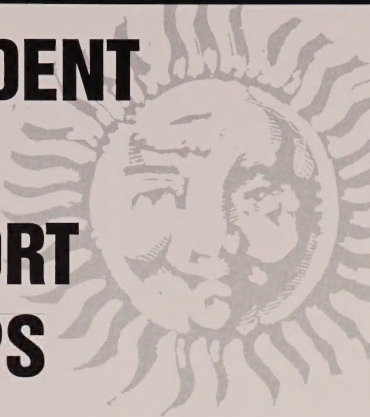
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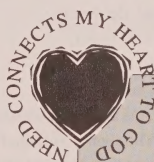


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Learning how to think and feel about ourselves in ways that are consistent with how God thinks and feels about us - that's the goal. Not an easy goal for most of us. But a good one. A very good one. We hope this issue of STEPS helps you to accept your needs as one of God's good gifts to you.



POETRY

Window Pain

by Lane Wiemann

When the death wish taps upon my window
I recall the tapping forty years ago
When small, I looked up to the starry sky
And wished, no, not that I could die,
but, rather, even more forlorn,
that I would never have been born.
It's hard to argue with the window pain,
But I'll resist: it taps more loss than gain.

Walking Wounded

by Wendy Apgar

We are the walking wounded who have no place to heal,
We are the walking wounded who aren't allowed to feel.
We're often told to just ignore all the hurt and pain,
That God will take it all away - but the pain remains.
We allow an injury the time it needs to mend
We give it a little time and on God we depend.
Yet a broken heart is denied, grief is pushed away -
This should be healed instantly, at least that's what we say.
If Jesus would walk this earth among us all today
He'd give the wounded time, He would listen and He'd pray.
As long as we don't hear, wounds not given time to mend,
We'll have the walking wounded, on this you can depend.

All the poems in this issue of STEPS are from the Poetry Discussion Group moderated by Mike Bayer on the NACR's Electronic Bulletin Board.
Join us in cyber-space! Use your modem to dial 310-690-8052.

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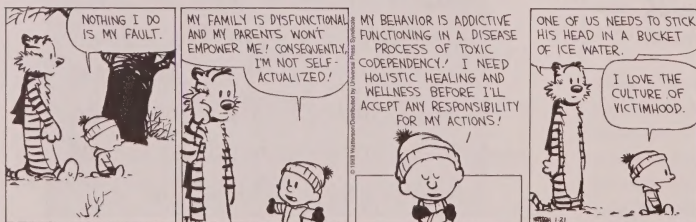
Feature manuscripts, first person/narrative stories, poetry, and fiction pieces are welcome if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. These manuscripts, letters to the editor, or requests to reprint material should be sent to: Editor, STEPS, P.O. Box 11095, Whittier, CA 90603. The opinions expressed in STEPS do not necessarily reflect an official position of the National Association for Christian Recovery or its parent organization, Christian Recovery International (formerly The Recovery Partnership).

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BEYOND ANONYMOUS

Calvin and Hobbes

by Bill Watterson



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SURVIVING & THRIVING

*This evening I trudged up the steps to my condo,
weary and resentful of the work that still needed to be done.*

Sorting through my mail I saw a hand-addressed envelope amongst the bills so I opened it first..

...

by CARMEN RENEE BERRY

A woman had recently read my book "When Helping You Is Hurting Me" and graciously took the time to let me know how my insights encouraged her to take better care of herself.

A sad smile came to my lips as I read her kind words. "I'd like to write her back and thank her," I thought, "but I'm so over-committed and busy helping others in their recovery that I just don't have the time."

Excuse me?

I've never been a big fan of Freud's, but I do wish he had been right about one thing - that insight was sufficient for change. To paraphrase Dale Ryan, if intellectual understanding could fix me, I'd be all better by now. In fact, I had enough insight into my addiction over ten years ago to write a book about the subject. A very insightful book, if I do say so myself.

But living our recovery is altogether different than waxing eloquent about the problem. Insight comes easily to me. So, unfortunately, does slipping back into my addictive helping and workaholicism, especially when my addiction is disguised as "recovery ministry." I remember one week several years ago in which I drove for an hour to give an all day seminar to child protective services workers on how to prevent burnout and take better care of themselves. The next day I drove an hour in the opposite direction to give two back-to-back workshops for mental health professionals on how to prevent burnout and take better care of themselves. I woke up early the next morning to catch a plane to northern California to present a workshop to a state-wide convention of city officials on how to prevent burnout and take better care of themselves. A cab was waiting outside the workshop door to whisk me off to the airport so I could fly out of state in time to give a keynote address on . . . yes, you guessed it, how to prevent burnout and take better care of ourselves.

I Have Changed.

I've been in recovery for nine years last Spring, a journey that has been more painful and more rewarding than I ever imagined. The changes, both internally and externally, have been tremendous and real.

- I am more attune to my body's signals of stress and distress than I was prior to my first burnout in 1985.

Rather than blame my body for migraines, sleepless nights or loss of appetite, I now recognize these body-experiences are God's way of trying to get my attention.

- I know how to nurture myself better through many avenues including massage, drawing, prayer, quiet walks, journaling, country western dancing and music.

- I have a more supportive community of friends and colleagues who love me enough to confront me when I'm over-doing it and nurture me when I'm depleted.

- I have a faith in a God who loves me, not merely as "an instrument" or an object used for some so-called higher good - a God who loves me just the way I am because I am a person of value.

- I realize that I am not perfect. The changes I've experienced are real, but I am still in process. And I am kinder to myself when I make mistakes or fall back into my addictive pattern.

Yesterday's Change Won't Keep Me Sober Today

As I look at my enormous "to do" lists, groan over the unreturned phone calls, apologize for another missed deadline and explain to my friends why I can't see them until the middle of next month, I have to acknowledge that I will always be susceptible to the addictive process. I don't always live out all of the insight I have, nor do I always take advantage of the wealth of support God provides for me. I do not like it when my personal addictions rise from the ashes to threaten my serenity yet again. At times I fear that I've not made any real changes at all. The truth is, however, I have changed. I am a healthier person battling similar problems.

Because I made positive choices yesterday, doesn't protect me from making mistakes today. I continue my process of healing, acknowledging the gains made and the woundedness remaining. My hope comes not from the illusion that I am fixed, but from the rich relationship I have with God. Every day I have the wonderful and terrifying opportunity to turn my life over to God who is the perfecter and finisher of my faith.



CARMEN RENEE BERRY

*Did you believe it when they said J-O-Y came
from putting "Jesus first, Others Second and Yourself Last?"
Henry Cloud and John Townsend help sort out the confusion in:*

TAKING TIME FOR SELF-CARE

IT'S OKAY TO PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR NEEDS

• • •

by HENRY CLOUD AND JOHN TOWNSEND

Exhausted and lonely one Monday afternoon, Sarah reached over and switched on the radio. It had been a rough weekend. Every request she made of the kids had turned into a battle, and her husband had remained planted in front of the television. She couldn't recall if he had said a caring word to her or the kids all weekend. It was like the old joke, she thought. "Ask me how my day was," says the comedian. "All right - how was your day?" "Don't ask." It was a bitter joke to Sarah. She didn't even want to think about how depressed she was. Maybe the radio would help. She flipped through the newspaper for the day's radio listings.

The topic on the Christian station was "Help When You're Down." She recognized the speaker's name; he was a local, well-respected pastor. She tuned in the station.

"...so you're down, troubled, lonely, you're under crushing pressure. You wonder sometimes if things will ever change for you."

Is he reading my mind? thought Sarah. He was describing her very feelings at that moment. He understood.

"My friend, there's an answer for you from the Word of God." Biblically based teaching was important to Sarah.

"The answer," said the pastor, "is to stop thinking about yourself and start thinking of others. Just as our Lord thought not of himself, but emptied himself for others, we will find joy in self-sacrifice and service. Get off the pity pot. Repent of your self-absorption, and find peace in sharing."

Sarah's heart dropped. *Peace in sharing? I've been sharing myself all weekend, and I'm in pieces, not at peace.* She had no sooner formed these resentful words in her mind, than she immediately felt guilty. After all, the pastor was quoting the Bible. *I guess he's right, she told herself bleakly. I'm just being selfish.*

She reaching for the church bulletin to see what additional committee she could volunteer for. Maybe in serving more, she'd find the happiness she longed for. But she was beginning to despair

of ever being happy, of ever feeling satisfied about herself and her life.

Every day sincere, well-intentioned Christians listen to messages similar to the one Sarah heard. That message - "Stop thinking of your own needs" - is taught by sincere, well-intentioned Christian teachers who only want to help people obey the Savior.

The problem is that it's not a biblical message. It sounds true, but it's not an accurate interpretation of the Scriptures.

The Root of the Problem

Many of us have been taught a self-annihilation doctrine for so long that it makes sense to us. After all, isn't self-centeredness at the core of our sinfulness? Aren't we supposed to deny ourselves and give sacrificially to God and others?

Certainly, self-centeredness is at the core of our sinfulness. This is a serious problem. When we refuse to see God for who he is - and ourselves for who we are - we deny the truth that he is God and we are his creatures. We put ourselves on the throne that only God should occupy. We idolize ourselves. We worship and serve "created things rather than the Creator" (Rom 1:25).

Not only is it true that self-centeredness is at the core of our sinfulness, but also we are to deny ourselves and sacrificially give

to God and others. In fact, Jesus summarized the entire Law and the Prophets under two simple commands: Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matt 22:37-40). Our love for others shows that we belong to God. We are to give from our fullness wholeheartedly as Jesus did.

So we hear self-denying passages like this in the Bible. We hear the oft-repeated maxim, "God first, others second, self last." And we conclude that the Christian life is a life of ignoring and even hating our own needs, focusing instead on others.

Yet to believe this is to confuse selfishness with stewardship. This crazy-making assumption - "It's selfish to have my needs met" - fails to distinguish between selfishness and a God-given responsibility to meet one's own needs. It's like someone saying, "I saw you last night at the gas station, filling your car's tank. I had no idea you were so self-centered. You need to pray about spending more time filling others' tanks with that gas." Ridiculous, yes - but this is essentially what the radio pastor told Sarah that Monday morning. Yet if we don't fill our own tank with gas, we won't get far.

The Bible actually values our needs, which are God-given and intended to propel us to growth and to God. Neglecting them leads to spiritual and emotional problems; having them met, however, frees us to meet the needs of others cheerfully and without resentment. Let's take a closer look at the biblical view of needs.

Incompleteness

In an old TV commercial for aspirin, a doting mother helps her grown daughter make dinner. Mom's eager helpfulness gets annoying, and her daughter's resentment builds. Finally the younger woman blows up. "Mother, please!" she says, "I'd rather do it myself!"

We're all inclined to do it ourselves.

Asking for help and support is inconvenient and uncomfortable. Sometimes it's unsafe. Yet God built dependency into all of us. We all need God, and we need each other. "No man is an island, entire of itself," wrote the English poet John Donne.

God intended us to be incomplete in and of ourselves. Dependency is built by God into the very fabric of the universe. Without the sun's warming rays, the earth would quickly become a frozen tomb. Without food and shelter from the elements, animals

creaturely position. He loves and cherishes us, but he doesn't need us.

God exists in a Trinity - three persons in one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14). His triune nature provides for him constant relationship and connectedness. In a way that we can't imagine, God is always attached, never in isolation. Yet, being God, he is self-sufficient within the Trinity.

Jesus experienced and expressed relational needs. He needed his Father. He "often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16, Mark 1:35). He used the expression "Abba, Father" when addressing his Father in heaven, indicating an especially close, intimate relationship to God.

Jesus needed more than his Father - he needed friends, too. Though the primary purpose of Jesus' going to the Garden of Gethsemane was to be alone with the Father, his secondary purpose was to have a select few of his disciples share - at some distance - in his agony. With Peter, James and John he shared his pain: "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. . . Stay here and keep watch" (Mark 14:34). In his own darkest night of the soul, Jesus reached out to his friends to support him (though they failed to give him companionship).

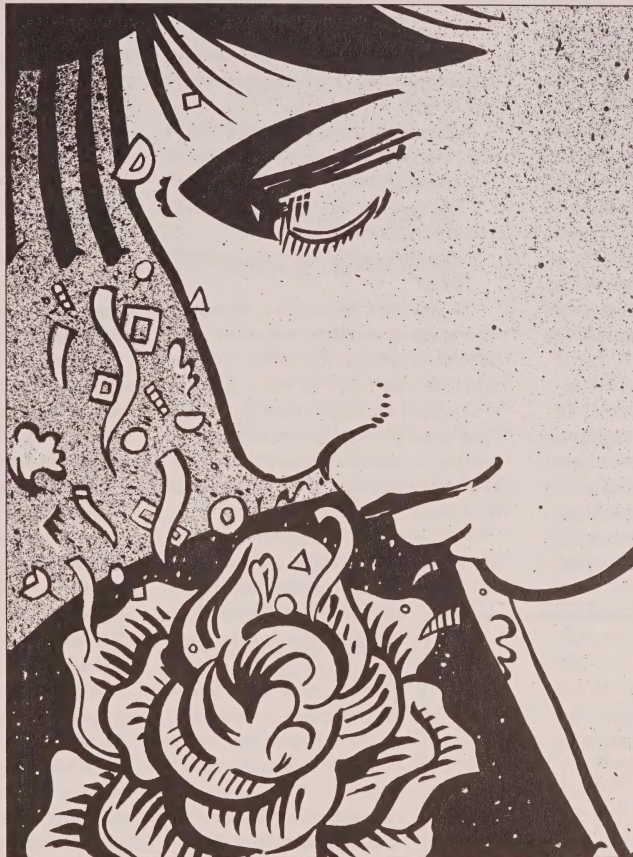
Incarnational Needs

As God's image bearers, created in his likeness, we also are created to reach outside ourselves to get what we need.

But it doesn't stop here. The Bible not only teaches us about our incompleteness, it instructs us about our need for people - "Jesus with skin on."

While many Christians understand that they can't live in a vacuum, they feel uneasy about anyone but God and "spiritual matters" filling that hole up. Yet God wants us to be loved not only by himself, but by each other. These needs are called incarnational needs.

Why incarnational? Because Jesus stands



would shrivel. Deprived of light, soil and water, plants would shrivel.

Even God reaches out for relationships, though it is difficult to imagine an all-powerful God with needs. In his very essence, however, God is a relational being. He is love (1 John 4:16), and love always has an object. A lover does not love in the abstract.

So to whom does God reach out for his relational needs? Certainly not to us. Though God desires closeness with us, he doesn't need us. This would put the Creator in a

alone in all the religions of the world. He became man-flesh (incarnation), to make an attachment to us just as we are. He showed us that God wants to connect with people, as a person. As John says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life".

Christianity is unique in that, while other religions involve humankind reaching up to God - in Jesus, God reaches down to our level. In other words, Almighty God reached down and baptized human connection by sending Jesus. Just as he hungered, thirsted, and felt loneliness, so can we.

Our incarnational needs are taught all through the Bible. For example, after he created Adam, God saw that it wasn't good for him to be alone (Gen. 2:18), so he created Eve. God built human beings to need him and to need each other. "Pity the man who falls," says the Preacher, "and has no one to help him up!" (Eccl 4:10). One of the most spiritual activities you can perform is to need other people.

Our Needs Are Logical

In the daily hospital psychotherapy group that I was conducting, some of the group members were depressed, some had anxiety disorders, some had compulsive and addictive problems. All were Christians, and all spoke about learning to depend on others

for their emotional neediness.

The conversation upset Raymond, however, who had been in the hospital for three days. He suffered from severe depression. He resisted coming into the program because he felt like a spiritual failure. In his mind, a depressed Christian was a backslidden Christian.

"This subject of needs just isn't valid," Raymond protested. "We are to minister grace to the world and get our minds off that nonsense."

"So, it's important to minister to the world?" I asked.

"Absolutely. We are to give comfort, encouragement, and hope to those who don't have it, in the name of Jesus."

"I certainly have no problem with that," I said. "But do you also get comfort, encouragement, and hope?"

"That's selfish," he replied. "God doesn't want me concentrating on myself."

"Then God's using you to hurt people."

"What?"

"If your need for comfort, encouragement and hope is selfish, then others' need for that is selfish, too. If it ain't okay for you to have it, it ain't okay for you to give it."

Gradually Raymond's theology changed - and so did his relationships with his wife and kids. He learned to accept his own neediness and to reach out and ask for help when he needed it.

The assumption "It's selfish to have my needs met" makes people crazy not only because it hurts people, but because it isn't true. It isn't logical, and it doesn't make sense. To give a cup of cold water to those who need it, we need to have drunk from it ourselves. If we are to forgive, we need to have been forgiven. Paul says it best:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Cor 1:3-4)

Our Needs Are Designed to Drive Us to Growth

Scientists have tried for years to invent a perpetual motion machine, one that can operate in-

definitely without fuel or maintenance - but with no success. It would be nice if we could all be perpetual motion machines, with no need to ask for help, no need to call a friend when we're depressed or panicked, no need to ask advice when our finances go awry, no need to talk to someone when our eating is out of control or our marriage is shaky.

Our neediness forces us to realize that we are creatures, that we must look up at God in humility and ask him for what we need. Our humble position is designed to drive us closer to God, to others, and ultimately to maturity, "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Jesus' story of the Pharisee and the tax collector makes this point:

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income." But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted. (Luke 18:10-14 NRSV).

The Pharisee was "standing by himself," boasting of his good works. But the tax collector would not even look up to heaven. He recognized his sins and inadequacies, and they drove him to God.

If you don't recognize your needs, you stagnate. You have little reason to seek God. Those with no symptoms don't seek a doctor. It's easier to deny your mortality when you don't suffer from high blood pressure, weight problems, or shortness of breath. Start putting on weight, though, or experience dizzy spells, or have to gasp for breath - then you call the doctor. Similarly, when you feel lonely and depressed, then you draw closer to others and to God. There will always be more demand for curative than preventive medicine.

Our needs place us, then, in the position of having to ask for help. Just as thirst leads us to drink and hunger forces us to find food, our spiritual and emotional neediness compels us to reach for someone else. The tax collector asked for mercy, and he "went down to his home justified" (Luke 18:14).



College of Positive Self-Image 7,
University of Low Self-Esteem 0.

Our Needs Are Designed to Drive Us to Humility

As long as we think we're better than most, we will rarely admit our needs and ask for help. We distance ourselves from other people, like Edom. The Edomites sought security in being distant and uninvolved, but their pride proved deceptive (Obad 1:3). As the Bible points out, "A man's pride brings him low" (Prov. 29:23).

Jim and Brenda came to me for marital help. It was soon clear to me that Jim was emotionally self-sufficient to a fault. When Brenda took the kids on an out-of-state trip to see her mom, Jim would call every day to see how they were doing, but he'd never admit that he was lonely and that he missed them.

When Brenda asked how he was doing, Jim would say, "You know me - I'm fine. Couldn't be better. You have a great time."

Brenda knew her husband, but only after a fashion. She knew that nothing threw Jim. She knew that he weathered job losses, physical ailments, and friendship conflicts with nary a frown. She knew that he didn't need help from anyone.

Finally, Brenda had had enough. She dragged him to couples therapy. "I don't know why Jim married me," she complained. "I don't feel like I matter to him. Sometimes I wish he'd have some huge tragedy just so he'd ask me for help."

Jim seemed arrogant to his wife because he'd been trained that way. Jim's father had been absent when he was young, and his mother was dependent and immature. He learned early not to depend on anyone else. For him to cry and be lonely or sad was too much for his weak mother, who'd spiral into depression. So Jim suppressed his negative feelings as well as the experience (but not the need) of needing others. He became resourceful and responsible.

Ironically, his resourcefulness and sense of responsibility was tough on his marriage. Brenda had no neurotic "need to be needed." She simply wanted to know her man. But his resistance to being vulnerable made him appear to be arrogant and self-satisfied, further isolating her from him.

It wasn't until Jim began seeing his self-sufficiency as pride instead of responsibility that he began changing his behavior and rebuilding his marriage.

We are responsible for ourselves. We all carry our own load of cares, obligations, and problems. The apostle Paul tells us: "Each one should carry his own load" (Gal 6:5).

This is functional independence, in which state you carry out your normal responsibilities. You don't ask others to work for your living, or to pay your bills for you.

At the same time, however, we are relationally dependent. We all need to be loved. It's the fuel of life. Being connected to God and others keeps us going. We need empathy, comfort, understanding, and reassurance from others. Jim had learned to be both functionally independent (this was healthy) and relationally independent (this

Jesus never said
'Blessed are those who
have their act together.'
If nothing is broken,
nothing can be fixed.

was unhealthy). He needed to cultivate a relational dependence; he needed to need others. That is humility. "A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor" (Prov. 29:23)

Humble people know they can't do it all themselves, for humility teaches them to ask for help. They know they must reach out to survive. That's why the Bible tells us that God "mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble" (Prov 3:34).

Our Needs Are Designed to Drive Us Closer to God

Answering an attack from the Pharisees, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9:12-13).

God doesn't rescue perfect people. He wants people with problems. People with nothing to fix have nothing to say to God. Those who are poor in spirit, those who are in mourning, those who are meek - those are blessed (Matt. 5:3-5) because they can be filled, can be comforted, can be helped. He never said, "Blessed are those who have their act together." If nothing is broken, nothing can be fixed.

We are drawn to this gospel message because we have problems. And after joining a church, we spend our next forty years

trying to hide our problems. Having no problems is a problem.

The self-righteous attitude of thinking we have no problems is what birthed Alcoholics Anonymous in the 1940's. People found that in A.A. meetings they could still have struggles; they could still be needy. In fact, they had to confess their shortcomings at every meeting. The church today is making great strides in embracing this biblical attitude. The church should be a place where it's safe to be unfinished, incomplete, and needy

Neglecting Our Needs Leads to Spiritual and Emotional Problems

If God built us with needs, then it stands to reason that letting our needs go unmet can cause major problems. Just as neglecting regular oil changes will destroy your car's engine, neglecting our God-given legitimate needs will cripple us.

Karen, a professionally dressed woman in her thirties, came to see me about her depression. Concentrating on her work and sleeping were equally difficult, she told me. She had withdrawn from family and friends; suicidal thoughts occurred to her more and more frequently. A complete physical had revealed nothing wrong. In severe depression, Karen felt despairing and hopeless. And she hadn't a clue about its cause.

During our first session, I explored Karen's past and present relationships. Karen had maintained a high position of leadership in her local church, was active in her community, and was a wonderful wife and mother. Yet nearly every significant person in Karen's life - her mother and father, her sister, her best friend from high school, her college boyfriend - had either abandoned her or had no emotional attachment to her.

She'd married Peter, a good man who nevertheless was unable to make deep emotional connections (just like Karen). His workaholic kept him away from home a lot; but in some ways, that was a relief to both of them. "Because we rarely see each other," she said, "we appreciate each other more when we're together."

Their kids were being raised by caring parents who didn't know how to receive what they were giving. And the children were having problems. Their nine-year-old daughter tended to be socially withdrawn, and their teenage son was beginning to run with the wrong crowd.

The more Karen talked, the clearer the picture became. Her personal emotional iso-

lation was repeating itself in her marriage and her church. For decades she had been running on emotional empty, getting along only on her strong will, guilt and adrenaline. Now she needed to learn the humble task of filling her spiritual tank up - with God and with people.

After I gave Karen my diagnosis, she asked, "Isn't there a book I could read, or a seminar I could attend?"

"As disconnected as you are now," I said, "your depression will get worse, no matter how many books you read or seminars you attend."

Karen took the scary, risky step of learning how to connect, how to ask for help, support, comfort and understanding. It wasn't easy, but she worked hard for a long time. As she became more humble, as she recognized her needs and began to ask for help to get them met, her depression gradually lifted.

Karen's depression signaled to her that she needed something outside of herself - at least a book or a seminar, she thought. She responded to the signal and learned how to be needy and poor in spirit. God provided the symptom and the resources; Karen worked at learning to ask.

Psychological symptoms are God's way of letting us know that something is wrong. Depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse, and compulsive behaviors are all symptoms of a deeper problem. These symptoms the Bible calls "fruit": "Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit" (Matt. 7:17-18). In other words, bad fruit is not the problem, but only a symptom of the problem. We need to dig until we find the root of the problem, then heal that. We must pay attention to our psychological, spiritual and relational symptoms, for they let us know if we are getting our needs met.

Getting Our Needs Met Helps Us Meet The Needs of Others

The false assumption that it is selfish to have our needs met is very seductive to Christians, probably because all of us want to be loving, caring people. Yet our desire to give ourselves to others is what some teachers use to scare us into thinking that taking care of our needs will drown us in a whirlpool of self-contemplation, hedonism or narcissism.

Nothing, the Bible says, is further from the truth. Having our needs met frees us to meet the needs of others - without resentment. Having a full stomach spiritually and emotionally allows us to give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

The most comforting people in the world are those who have been comforted; the most understanding people are those who have been understood; and the most loving people, those who have been loved. The disciple whom Jesus loved the most (John 21:20) unsurprisingly became known as the apostle of love. What he received, he later gave.

Jesus confronted Simon the Pharisee with this truth when a prostitute, overcome with God's grace, washed Jesus' feet with her tears: "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven - for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little" (Luke 7:47). Having found forgiveness, the woman was able to love much, whereas Simon the Pharisee was blind to his own neediness and was therefore unable genuinely to love.

Contrary to what the radio preacher had so vigorously taught, Sarah began meeting her own needs first. She resigned from a few committees. People who depended on her did without while she got help. Most important, when she was in need, instead of calling and offering to help, she called and asked for it.

"It's really different," she told me. "I didn't expect what has happened to my ministry. Hour for hour, I probably do less for others than I used to, but what I do is light years better. For the first time in my Christian life, I actually want to help. I want to serve. I don't feel resentment or guilt. I think I'm actually learning what being loving feels like."

One could do worse than sit at the prostitute's feet and learn from her. The Pharisees in your life may want you to stay away from reminders of your neediness. You do need to adhere to their truly scriptural teachings (Matt 23:2-3), but as you grow more and more aware of your deep and desperate incompleteness, of your need for love from God and from others, you truly become - as the prostitute did, and as Sarah is doing - more like the Master.

Ask yourself, "Am I asking for what I need?" You may need support in a crisis, or advice about a problem, or comfort in a loss. All these needs the Father of the heavenly lights welcomes. "Every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17), and they often reach us through other people (Acts 9:6-19) ☞

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Spilled Milk

I reached for the bread—
In innocence unconcerned,
I bumped a glass instead—it fell.
Then I heard his anger burn.

"Damn you," he started,
"Just look at what you've done!"
I held my head in silence—shame—
"I'm so clumsy—I'm so dumb."

Years later at my table,
I watched a small arm reach.
The elbow tipped a glass of milk—
It fell, and then he looked at me.

I thought, "He growing, young, unsteady—
Who am I to judge—to speak?"
I said, "It's okay, son, don't worry."
He smiled and continued to eat.

People reach for life—for living
And sometimes when they do,
They tip the cup and cause some pain
Spill milk—spill blood—hurt too.

The 'righteous ones' are quick to see
And condemnation flows.
"Damn you," they cry and scream,
Curses fall like heavy blows.

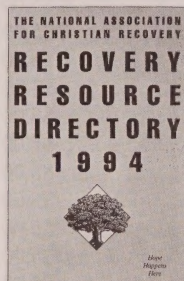
But another—truly righteous—watches
He sets at the table's head.
He thinks, "They're growing, unsteady,
Needing mercy and grace instead."

"Curse them!" cry the 'righteous ones'
"Burn them, see what they've spilled!"
Instead, he comes from heaven, with towel,
And wipes up all the milk.

Jerry Seiden



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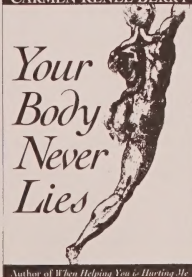
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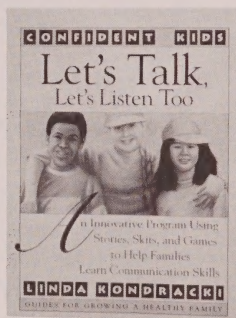


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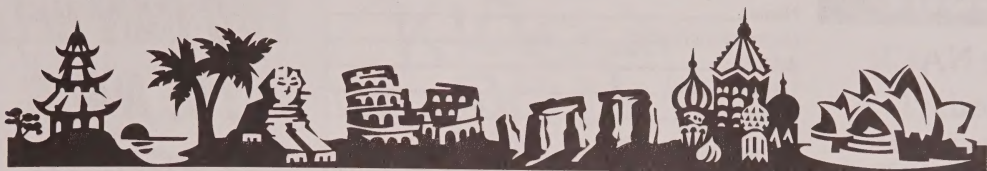
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Your Needs Are Okay With Me



by LINDA KONDRACKI

Quit bothering me! Can't you see I'm tired?"
 "You can't be sick today. I can't take the time off work!"

"Don't be so selfish. Your little brother can play in your room if he wants to. He's just a baby."

"Remember this formula for joy: Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last."

"You're getting too big to sit on my lap and be cuddled; that's just for little kids."

"Stop that crying this instant!"

Do any of these statements sound familiar? If you are a parent in recovery, you probably grew up with messages like these, all of which communicated to you that your needs were not okay. Perhaps one of the most difficult parts of recovery is learning to recognize our own needs and find appropriate ways to get them met. And the next question is, "How do we keep from passing on to our children the message that was passed on to us - 'your needs don't matter.'"

One way is to clearly spell out the messages we want to send to our kids. We can do that by using slogans. Slogans can be powerful reminders and teaching tools when we make them a part of our everyday life. Look at those listed below and choose several that capture what you would like to communicate to yourselves and your children. Write them out and post them on the bathroom mirror or the refrigerator door. Use them as encouragements (It's okay to ask for help), affirmations (Your needs are okay with me), and teaching tools (Say what is true!).

SLOGANS FOR PARENTS TO GIVE TO THEMSELVES:

#1: Children are supposed to be needy. By nature, children are self-centered and demanding. Reminding yourself of that can help a lot to keep you from feeling resentful of the time and energy they demand from you.

#2: "Lone Ranger parenting" is self-destructive. Recognize that no parent can meet their children's needs 100% of the time. It is much healthier to surround yourself with

a support network of people who can have positive influences in your children's lives, and don't be afraid to ask for help from them when you need it.

#3: You can't give your children what you don't have yourself. Use this slogan as a reminder to keep working on being okay with your needs and finding healthy, creative ways to get them met. Your kids will learn tons about their own needs by watching you.

SLOGANS FOR PARENTS TO GIVE TO THEIR KIDS:

#1: It's okay to ask for help. If you need help, ask for it. Don't whine, complain or blame someone else. Everyone needs help; don't ever be afraid or ashamed to ask for it.

#2: Your needs are okay with me. Don't be afraid of your needs; let's talk about them.

#3: My needs are okay, too: I (and others in the family) have needs, too. When our needs are in conflict, we can work it out, or you can find someone else to help.

#4: Say what is true: This slogan reminds kids to state their needs in clear, straight messages. My favorite illustration of this comes from a kindergarten teacher who asked me what she could do about a student who constantly complained about feeling sick. I asked the teacher how she responded to the child. "Well," she replied, "I usually try to talk her out of it, give her a big hug and send her back to her seat." I suggested that perhaps she was really looking for the hug, and that she could give the girl permission to ask for the hug without having to act sick to get it. The next week the teacher reported, "She asks me for a hug every day now, but no longer complains about being sick!"

Another example: If your child says to you, "You always play with Johnny and you never play with me!" you can respond with, "I don't think what you just said is true. Please tell me what you are feeling (or thinking or want) from me right now." Help your child say something that is more true, such as "I need some play time with you, too." or "I feel left out".

ACTIVITY

HAVE A SLOGAN PARTY

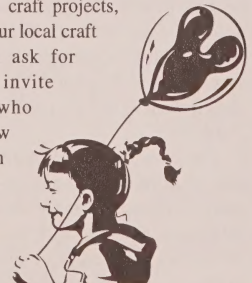
Here's a way to accomplish several things at once. You can reinforce important truths by working with slogans, and at the same time enjoy a family evening together. Kids will love having everyone - adults included - working together on craft projects. You can also extend your support network by inviting one or more families to join you.

Choose several slogans from the list above, or others that have meaning to your family. Have available a variety of craft materials for making the slogans into usable items.

Some examples include:

- 1) Cross stitch them on to wall hangings or pillow covers
- 2) Use a computer graphics program to make banners
- 3) Create book covers for school books
- 4) Make door knob hangers or book-marks
- 5) Make cards you can give each other or send to friends or relatives
- 6) Decoupage plaques (does anyone ever do that anymore??)

NOTE: If you do not know how to prepare craft projects, stop by your local craft store and ask for help, or invite friends who know how to do such projects to help and join you.



YOU SHOULD BE BETTER BY NOW

The second in a three part series on resistance to recovery.

...

by DALE RYAN

In the last issue of STEPS I discussed the most insensitive, intransigent and personally painful kind of resistance to recovery - our own resistance. We tend to be our own worst critics. We resist the changes most tenaciously. In most cases we fight it, reject it, hate it - probably more than anyone else.

It is often true, however, that the recovery journey takes us through territory that is either ambivalent towards or downright hostile to recovery. Recovering codependents, for example, may find that some people prefer the 'good old days' when they were more compliant and self-sacrificing. Unpleasant emotions, once medicated with addictive substances or processes, may be experienced as threats to relationships that have adapted over the years to the insanity of addiction. Some people in recovery experience hostility when they start telling the truth in social systems which have been committed to silence for generations. Other people experience shame and rejection when people are skeptical about or merely uncomfortable with the changes that recovery brings.

Recovery is about change and most of us will encounter resistance when change produces new and unfamiliar behaviors. It is not reasonable to expect that all of the changes which take place during recovery will be received with rejoicing as if they were 'answers to prayer'.

Resistance and Rejection

Most of the resistance we encounter in recovery will be personal and painful. Even when resistance comes in the form of intellectualized 'arguments' against recovery, it may feel like personal assault rather than dispassionate analysis. For example, suppose someone says: "You can't change the past, so you should focus on the positive." This may make some intellectual sense to you. It may 'ring true.' It might, indeed, be good advice at this particular stage of your recovery. But for many people it may also feel like a profound dismissal of their struggle towards sanity. The key to sorting out confusing stuff like this is not the truth or falsehood of "you should focus on the positive". What is critically important is the tone of voice in which you hear "you should focus on the positive". Is the tone practical and understanding? Or is it shaming and dismissing? Do I feel rejected as a person when I hear this?

I have found it very helpful when I am confused about a critique of recovery to ask myself questions both about the content of the criticism and about the 'tone' of the criticism. What tone of voice do I hear when I hear the critique? Sometimes I can identify a specific person's voice in how I hear negative comments about recovery. It may be that under-

standing how you experience a criticism - it's tone and 'feel' - will be as important to your response as the content of the criticism.

The Anti-recovery Backlash

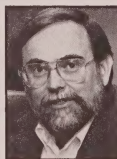
Few of us need additional criticism. So, why focus on criticisms of recovery? Well, it might not be a good time for you to do this. At some stage of the recovery process, however, taking the time to think through predictable criticisms may help you to sort out the confusion more easily when someone criticizes your recovery. The point is not to try to be so 'educated' about recovery that you can 'argue' effectively with people in denial. There just isn't any mileage in that. There is, however, some benefit in disciplining your intellectual capacity so that it can support your recovery.

Over the last year I have read most of the popular books of the 'antirecovery' genre. The Top Ten Reasons Not To Work On Your Recovery list is a very brief summary of the kinds of criticisms which people hostile to recovery make about recovery. It is NOT the purpose of this short article to provide you with intelligent responses to these criticisms. It is, rather, my hope that you will spend time struggling with these criticisms and that, in the process, you will learn to trust more deeply your capacity to think through criticisms of this kind. It is my hope that you will learn to trust your instincts about 'content' and 'tone' more deeply. You are not stupid. You can think through things that seem very confusing at first!

Responding to Resistance

I'm not sure that I have much general advice about how to respond to criticisms of recovery. Each instance is so unique. There are, however, a couple of things that come to mind:

First, some criticisms of recovery, even when published by distinguished folks with scholarly credentials, are just 'cheap shots' - critiques that are uninformed about the realities of the recovery process. The best example of this from the Top-Ten List, I suppose, is 'recovery is simple minded.' It is, dare I say it, a simple minded criticism. (I know that sounds like 'I know you are, so what am I?', but I enjoyed writing it!) It is true, of course, that many of us desperately needed to learn to 'keep it simple'. One way the addictive process sustains itself is to make things so complicated that no one can possibly figure out what's really going on. Because of that kind of confusion, recovery necessarily involves getting back to basics. There is a sense in which Martin Luther got it right when he said "To progress is always to begin again." (Martin Luther, Lectures on Ro-



DALE RYAN

mans). I suppose 'tell the truth' might sound simple-minded to some people. It seems like a pretty simple thing. And, in theory, I suppose, it is. It has been my experience, however, that becoming the kind of person who has a capacity for the truth is a very difficult and complicated process. Recovery may be about simple things, but that doesn't make recovery simple minded.

Second, some criticisms of recovery are fundamentally misguided even though they may contain elements of truth. Most people in recovery recognize that there is some danger of excessive self-focus in recovery. That's part of the reason, of course, that the 12th Step of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous involves a disciplined effort to 'take the message to others'. Sobriety, like any kind of recovery journey, can't be sustained without an outward focus. A kind of disciplined narcissism may, however, be a necessary part of early recovery - particularly for people in recovery from trauma or abuse. Someone who has spent 30 years disciplining themselves *not* to pay attention to their feelings, their bodies or their memories, may not be able to break these habits without a very disciplined season of self-focus. It will certainly not look like a 'healthy balance' of self- and other- focus. Narcissism is not one of the goals of recovery, but an appropriate, disciplined self-focus will be a necessary part of the process for many people.

I encourage you to spend time with each of the kinds of resistance to recovery listed in the Top-Ten List. Ask yourself:

- 1) Does this criticism have any truth to it?
- 2) Does this criticism have any specific relevance to where I am right now in my recovery journey?
- 3) If this criticism has some relevance to my personal recovery, is it okay for my recovery to be imperfect or do I have to get this right too?
- 4) When I read this criticism, what tone of voice do I hear?
- 5) If what I hear is shame, what do I need?

Christian Resistance

I think it is likely that each of the criticisms of recovery on the Top-Ten List will be baptized with Christian vocabulary and presented as 'Christian' critiques of recovery. So, it makes sense to give some thought to these criticisms now - you may see them again! In the next issue of STEPS I'll look at some of the forms of resistance to recovery that are most common in the Christian community.

TOP TEN REASONS NOT TO WORK ON YOUR RECOVERY

1. Recovery is simple minded

"We should worry about the willingness of so many to believe that the answers to existential questions can be encapsulated in the portentous pronouncements of bumper-sticker books." (Kaminer p 7)

2. Recovery makes mountains out of mole hills

"The term 'victimization,' like addiction, has come to describe incidents that were previously considered accidents, misunderstandings, or the normal ups and downs of life." (Katz and Liu, p 30)

3. Recovery is authoritarian

"The self-help tradition has always been covertly authoritarian and conformist, relying as it does on a mystique of expertise, encouraging people to look outside themselves for standardized instructions on how to be, teaching us that different people with different problems can easily be saved by the same technique. It is anathema to independent thought." (Kaminer p 6)

4. Recovery encourages irresponsibility

"I have done all these terrible things and hurt all these people, the program follower learns to say, and I am dreadfully sorry, but it wasn't really me doing it—it was this addiction, this disease over which I had no control." (Katz p 47).

5. Recovery is too religious

"Although the literature about recovery from addiction and codependency borrows heavily from family systems theory and seems, at first, an offshoot of pop psychology, it's rooted most deeply in religion. . . . More than they resemble group therapy, twelve-step groups are like revival meetings, carrying on the pietistic tradition." (Kaminer p 3)

6. Recovery encourages narcissism

"Recovery gives people permission always to put themselves first, partly because it doesn't give them a sense of perspective on their complaints: parental nagging is not the equal of physical abuse and deprivation, much less genocide; vague intimations of unease are not the same as cancer. No one seems to count her blessings in recovery." (Kaminer p 27)

7. Recovery encourages people to find their identity in negatives

"One of the hallmarks of poor mental health is the tendency to view oneself in the bleakest terms possible. Yet most self-help groups insist that the only way to deal with a problem is to adopt it as your primary identity." (Katz and Liu p 43)

8. Recovery fails to distinguish degrees of trauma

"The failure to acknowledge that there are hierarchies of human suffering is what makes recovery and other personal development fashions 'selfish' and 'narcissistic.'" (Kaminer p 27)

9. Recovery is unnecessary

"In most cases, no matter how bad the addiction seems at the time, people recover from such a phase without mishap when they move on to the next stage in their lives." (Peele p. 149)

10. Recovery expects weak people to help each other

"Relations that are based on mutual weakness cannot serve as sources of strength or enrichment. Unfortunately, self-help groups breed just this kind of connection." (Katz and Liu p 56)

Peele, Stanton, *Diseasing of America: Addiction Treatment Out of Control*, Lexington Books(D.C.Heath & Co) 1989

Katz, Stan J. and Aimee E. Liu, *The Codependency Conspiracy*, Warner Books, 1991
Kaminer, W., *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional*, Addison Wesley, 1992

MEN'S ISSUES: MAKING IT THROUGH THE MINEFIELDS



In the last issue of STEPS, Patrick Means talked about the pressures on men to succeed, and the destructive results of those pressures. This article continues with a discussion of the third destructive consequence of toxic pressure.

3. The Development of a False Self

Because we men have been raised to hide our weaknesses and exaggerate our strengths, we often find ourselves burning energy keeping our "false self" propped up and looking good.

One of the most distressing results of this is that no one truly knows us. True intimacy is impossible, because intimacy involves revealing and sharing who we really are with another person.

Many of the men I've met in my workshops describe lives that are crammed full of work and activities, but almost completely devoid of deep relationships - either with their wives, or with other men. This is compounded in our society by the ways we've been trained to relate to other men. We tend not to establish deep friendships with men - partially out of homophobia, and partially because we've been trained to view other men as competitors. We're most comfortable with a superficial, semi-rowdy, slap-em-on-the-butt kind of relationship with other men formed around activities. And so the genre: "fishing buddies," "golfing buddies," "drinking buddies," and so on.

After my life blew apart seven years ago, an old college friend wrote me to extend his friendship, and just to be a listening ear if I wanted to talk. I remember writing him back and saying that I was grateful for his offer, but that I didn't quite know how to respond, and that I had a fair amount of fear, because I'd only shared my most vulnerable thoughts and feelings with women before, and never with a man. I've gone on to develop several deep friendships with men, and they've been some of the richest experiences of my life.

The diagram below shows the different "selves" we share with others. Those who know only our "Public Self" know what we look like, what our job is, and how we act when we're "putting our best foot forward." These people we categorize as acquaintances.

Those who know our "Personal Self" know a bit more about us. They know our personality, our likes and dislikes, our most obvious strengths and weaknesses, and some of the ways we relate to our wife and children. These people are our friends.

The person we keep hidden from almost everyone is our "Private Self," and the people who know us on this level we call our confidants. Our confidants know our true character, warts and all. To them, we've entrusted our most precious secrets: our dreams, our fears, and even the issues and behaviors from our dark side that we struggle with the most. I have found deep healing from the experience of sharing this innermost

part of my self, first with my wife, and then, through my 12 Step experience, with other men whom I trust. This is the level of soul-nourishing fellowship that John in his epistle describes as "walking in the light" with one another.¹

If there are activities or behaviors in your life currently that you have not shared with your wife, or sponsor or confidant, then there is an additional compartment in your life called "Secret." Often it's our fear of criticism or rejection or some other loss that causes us to hold back a portion of ourselves from those we're close to. But it is our secrets that keep us imprisoned without intimacy, without the nurturance of deep relationships.

Growth Step: Draw and label the diagram below on a separate sheet of paper. Under the "Personal Self" list the names of people who know you on this level. Do the same under "Private Self" with those who are your confidants. If you have behaviors, fears or dreams that you have shared with no one else, draw and label the "Secret" compartment on the diagram. Begin to develop male friendships in which it is safe to share your "Private Self."

			S
			E
			C
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			T
Public	Personal	Private	

As we stop hiding our weaknesses and strengths as men, and begin to relate to our wives and to other men in deeply honest ways, we'll experience acceptance and affirmation that we never dreamed possible. But like anything worthwhile, it takes time.

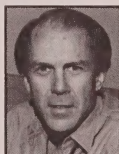
In The Velveteen Rabbit, the children's story in which a nursery room stuffed rabbit wants more than anything to become real, a profound exchange takes place between the Rabbit and the wise old Skin Horse. The Rabbit wants to know exactly how one becomes real, and whether it happens "all at once."

"It doesn't happen all at once," the Skin Horse tells the Rabbit. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or who have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby.

"But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."²

1. I John 1:7

2. The Velveteen Rabbit, Margery Williams, Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.



PATRICK MEANS

Becoming Entirely Ready for God to Work

by VERNON J. BITTNER



STEP 6: UNLESS WE'RE

ENTIRELY WILLING

TO CHANGE. . .

CHANGE WILL BE JUST

ANOTHER GOOD INTENTION

Letting go of our destructive character traits so that God can remove them is very difficult. When a person has been living with a particular life-style, it is easier to retain it than to give it up to God. It is familiar and predictable and gives us an unholy "comfort."

I recall how difficult it was for me to give up my suicidal tendencies. Not only did I overtly attempt suicide, but I covertly continued my destructive ways even after I began to know the love of God. Destructive character traits take time to change. I did not acquire them overnight, and I did not get rid of them easily either.

My primary reason for attempting suicide was that I had turned my anger in on myself and had become depressed. I had isolated myself from people. But I was not so depressed that I could not function. To commit suicide, people need enough energy and motivation to act on anger they have internalized.

After I began my recovery process, I continued to bottle up my anger. I refused to tell people what I thought and felt. Evidence of this was my tendency toward having automobile accidents. Also, I would get depressed from time to time as a lot of people do. Sometimes all my anger would be focused on one event. I remember one day when I was trying to get my lawn mower started. I became so furious at its lack of cooperation that I was about to carry it across the street and throw it into the valley. In the process of doing this, I began to realize how inappropriate my anger was for the situation. I realized that I was not only angry about the lawn mower, but about a lot of things that had been accumulating for months. My difficulty was that I was storing up the anger and nursing it. The lawn mower episode was the situation that gave me permis-

sion in my own mind to let it out.

I had gotten my anger out, but it was still a destructive part of my life. I had to turn it over to God and let him help me with it. I was not certain how I was going to do this, but I knew I had to do it.

At this time I learned the importance of Christian fellowship. Other people had always been there to help, but I had not reached out before. I had prided myself on being able to handle things alone. I had to realize that it was OK to be weak at times and allow others to help me. No one can be strong all of the time.

In the process of letting go of my false pride, I found help in a Christian fellowship group. I had come to realize that part of my problem with anger was that I had not learned to tell people when I was angry. Therefore I was turning this anger in on myself. I was resenting myself for allowing others to walk on me. Not only was I being hurt by others, but I was also hurting myself. I gave others permission to discount me.

By turning my anger over to God and to the Christian fellowship, I discovered that I needed to tell people my feelings - especially the negative ones. I had to let go of that behavior so that God could give me the strength to change. If my behavior did not change, I would not be able to respect myself. And if I did not learn to like myself, I would continue to put myself in a position to be used by others, and the cycle would repeat. I was trapped, and I was the only one who could decide to change. I would have to be open to God's strength and to the support of important people in my life; otherwise there would be no possible recovery.

When we allow God to remove our destructive behavior, we are beginning to cooperate with God's will for our lives. God created us for life and not death, for fellowship

and not isolation, for health and not illness, and for serenity and not turmoil. This is why he sent his Son. He wanted us to experience the peace, holiness, joy and community that only he can give - if not fully in this life, then certainly in the life to come.

God did not intend for us to destroy ourselves with alcohol, food, work, stress or resentment. We were created with the natural inclinations for life, fulfillment and serenity.

The removal of our destructive character traits requires our cooperation and patience. We need to remember that change takes time.

And we must be *willing* to change. A lot of people try to change or say they will "do the best they can." Unfortunately, this is not enough. I have had people coming to me for months for counseling who are "trying" to change but are unsuccessful. People often tell me that they are "doing the best they can," but they do not believe there is much they can do. Often this becomes a good excuse for not changing.

We need to desire more than anything else to turn our character defects over to God. This is crucial to our recovery. This desire, however, is often aroused when the pain and discomfort of our present situation become so great that we are willing to do anything to make the pain go away.

The important thing in letting go is that we commit ourselves to make a beginning and then keep working at it. It is not important how halting we are or how often we fall, but rather how committed and willing we are to let go of those things which we thought we could never live without.

From You Can Help With Your Healing by Vernon J. Bittner, (Augsburg, 1992) Used with permission.

GROUP WORK

GETTING DOWN TO THE NUTS & BOLTS OF SUPPORT GROUP MINISTRY

*Bill Morris focuses on the importance of safety in recovery groups. The second in a series
of short articles on the care and feeding of support groups.*

To facilitate recovery, members of a support group must be safe for one another. Unless a group is safe, members will not feel free to take the risks to reach the level of honesty required to know and be set free by the truth. David realized that God desired truth in his inmost being if he were to find the wisdom to cleanse his heart, renew his spirit and restore his life to balance and sanity (Ps. 51). Some very definite things that we do or do not do in support groups maintain an atmosphere of safety.

♦ *To be safe for one another, group members maintain anonymity and confidentiality at all times.* Group members are not to be identified to anyone outside the group at any time for any reason - not to friends, spouses, elders, or even pastors, no matter how interested and concerned they may be. Maintaining confidentiality means not repeating anything that anyone shares in the group to anyone outside the group at any time for any reason. What is shared in the group stays within the four walls of the meeting room and in the hearts of those who share those experiences.

There may be three exceptions to this expectation: (1) the person indicates a suicidal desire, (2) the person speaks of a homicidal intent, (3) a minor child is being physically or sexually abused. Sharing that information in good faith with the appropriate person or authority to protect someone from harm should not be considered a breach of confidentiality.

Maintaining confidentiality also means that group members do not talk about another group member or his or her issues unless that person is present to respond. This avoids the danger of gossip and the possibility that someone may be misrepresented to

others outside the group who may overhear a conversation between group members. Concern for a group member should be communicated directly to that person in a kind and open manner.

Obviously, members of the group are free to share anything about themselves that they are doing or learning from their involvement in a support group with anyone they choose to. That can even be part of recovery and is encouraged in Step Twelve of the Twelve-Step process of recovery. We cannot share anyone else's testimony. We allow others to share their testimonies when and where they choose.

♦ *To be safe for one another, group members do not minimize, criticize, judge or condemn what another member may be thinking, feeling or doing.* It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict. Our job is to reflect the kindness and acceptance of God, for Christ's sake, and allow Him to lead persons in the group to repent and change the thoughts, feelings and behaviors that are sabotaging their lives. Christ said that He came into the world not to condemn it but to save it (John 3:17). The work of a support group is not to condemn members for anything they may be thinking, feeling or doing but to offer salvation (safety) through Jesus Christ.

♦ *To be safe for one another, group members do not permit direct confrontation or physical or verbal attacks.* Confrontation doesn't change behavior. It may stop it momentarily, but unless people choose to change, the new behavior will not be permanent. The desire to change must be internally rather than externally motivated. People change as the result of encouragement to change. (Keep in mind that we are

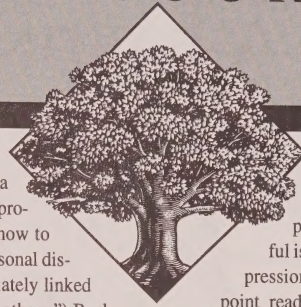
referring here to the process of change in support groups. There are a time and a place for confrontation or an intervention to get people to stop self-destructive behavior.) Under no circumstances are there to be physical or verbal attacks on group members. Physical attacks are not just physical blows but consist of acts of intimidation through the use of force or the suggested or implied threat of force. Verbal attacks are judgmental statements, sarcasm, name-calling, or demeaning or belittling statements. Verbal attacks can also involve intimidating displays of anger or rage toward a group member.

Within the support group, confrontation always takes place indirectly. As people assume responsibility for focusing only on themselves and sharing their experience, strength and hope, they are forced to look at their lives. It is an internal confrontation.

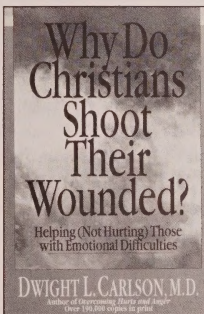
♦ *To be safe for one another, group members do not attempt to fix other people's situations, give advice, take other's inventories, or tell others how to work their recovery programs.* Using a support group to problem-solve situations is dangerous because it communicates a lack of confidence in a persons' ability to think and decide for themselves. Putting the group in the position of giving advice and being the source of wisdom for group members is dangerous because it creates an unhealthy dependency on the group as the higher power rather than on God. When we take other's inventories, we focus on what they may be doing or need to change rather than concentrating on what God needs to do in our lives. Jesus warned against this practice when He instructed us not to worry about the speck in another

Continued on back cover

SOURCES & RESOURCES



Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded?: Helping (Not Hurting) Those with Emotional Difficulties, Dwight L. Carlson (InterVarsity Press, 1994). Carlson takes a sensitive look at the kind of shameful criticism which many people in recovery have experienced from religious communities steeped in toxic faith. In addition to exploring many kinds of criticisms often made of people struggling with psychological problems, Carlson presents the clear biblical alternative. He closes the book with a paragraph which summarizes his central passion: "We need to keep in mind that God, as the Good Shepherd, does not stand at the door scolding the sheep for their bruises, ticks and ignorance, or for wandering off and getting lost. He welcomes his sheep, protects them and soothes their wounds with oil. You are his sheep, and he knows you by name; he loves and cares for you. As Jeremiah 31:3 says, he loves you with an everlasting love and draws you to him with lovingkindness".



The Healing Words of Jesus, James R. Beck (Baker, 1993). In this thoughtful book, Dr. Beck examines six healing metaphors from the Bible: 'yoke', 'thirst for living water', 'salt and light', 'the way', 'the shepherd' and 'the rock.' A professor of counseling at Denver Seminary, Beck brings both clinical expertise and sound scholarship to his writing. The strength of the book is in its focus on the spiritual and psychological impact of biblical language - sometimes with surprising results. Would you have anticipated, for example, that a chapter on the metaphor of being 'yoked' to Christ would turn out to be about the importance of having healthy boundaries? ("No one would work a team of

draft animals with a flexible yoke. By offering us a fixed yoke, Jesus seems to provide us with a model of how to maintain suitable interpersonal distance. As we are appropriately linked to Christ, so can we be to others.") Beck does a wonderful job of mining the rich resources of these biblical metaphors. Pastors may find excellent material for preaching here. Highly recommended.

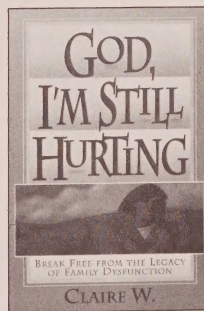
God I'm Still Hurting: Break Free from the Legacy of Family Dysfunction

God Help Me Stop: Break Free from Addiction and Compulsion

God Help Me Create: Realize Your Creative Potential

God Where Is Love?: Break Free from the Pain of Codependency

Claire W. (Zondervan, 1994). This series of short workbooks does a wonderful job of integrating 12 Step sensitivities with Christian principles. Each chapter is a series of short meditations followed by a question for reflection, a suggestion or a text of Scripture for continued meditation. Any of these volumes would be a useful guides for personal meditations but they also contain brief guidelines for use as the basis for group study. These are *workbooks* - do the work, and they will pay significant returns on your investment.

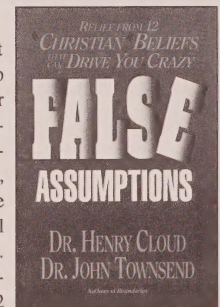


Dark Clouds, Silver Linings, Archibald D. Hart, (Focus on the Family, 1993.) Subtitled 'Depression can be a healing emotion when you learn how to cooperate with it', this book takes seriously the epidemic nature of depression in modern society. Hart estimates that 1 in 18 adults suffers from depression. The book is structured around a long series of

questions ranging from 'Is depression a failure to trust God's promises?' to 'How successful is medication in treating depression?'. The format may disappoint readers looking for more in-depth discussions of difficult questions. If you are depressed, however, a single question and answer may be all you can take in during one sitting and the format may be perfect. In any case, Hart's book is full of balanced wisdom and should be helpful to many people in recovery who find that depression threatens their progress. Also includes short articles by Joni Eareckson Tada, Florence Littauer and Ben Patterson on their experiences with depression.

False Assumptions, Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (Zondervan, 1994). The lead article in this issue of STEPS is a slightly condensed version of chapter one from this book.

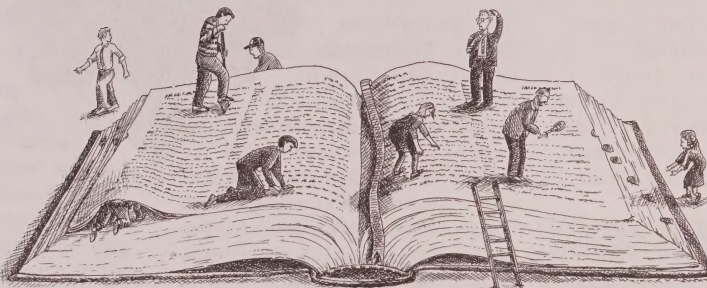
If you are struggling to sort out the relationship between your faith as a Christian and recovery principles, then the whole volume is well worth your time. Subtitled "Relief from 12 'Christian Beliefs' that Can Drive You Crazy," Cloud and Townsend do an excellent job of responding to some of the things that really can drive you crazy. If you think 'I just need to give it to the Lord,' or 'I can leave the past behind,' or 'If I have God, I don't need people,' or 'Guilt and shame are good for me' then this book was written with you in mind. These views are common in the Christian community. They can drive you crazy. And you deserve better than that.



Homelessness is not a simple problem. But Christian recovery is an important part of the solution!

HOMELESSNESS & RECOVERY: A LASTING SOLUTION

by MICHAEL LIIMATTA



Everyone in substance abuse counseling has at one time or another

pointed to the "skid row bum" and said "You don't have to be like him to be an addict or alcoholic!" While this type of person may represent only 5% of all addicts, Christians who are in recovery have a lot more in common with him than they may think! A drive through the streets of any major city reminds us that the "skid row bum" has not disappeared. Alarming, he has been joined by hundreds of thousands of people now called "the homeless." Who are they? 18-35 year old men, women who are 16-30 years of age, and single parents with children now represent the bulk of the homeless population. Most are minorities and local people, not transients, who have been homeless for one year or less. On today's "skid row" we find people who are dependent on a variety of drugs, emotionally dysfunctional, mentally ill, and medically at-risk, especially for HIV/AIDS. A high percentage of them have been sexually and physically abused.

Addiction & Homelessness

Besides not having a home to call their own, most of the 500,000 to 2 million people identified as homeless have something else in common - addiction and mental illness. According to one study, up to two-thirds of homeless adults suffer from alcoholism and at least half suffer from drug disorders.¹ In their book *A Nation In Denial*, Alice Baum and Donald Burnes shatter many of the myths surrounding the root causes of homelessness, which have little to do with the economy, governmental social policies, lack of affordable housing, and so forth. According to their research, at least 65-85% of all homeless adults suffer from chronic alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness or some combination of the three, often complicated by serious medical problems. At least one-third of the homeless suffer from severe and persistent chronic psychiatric disorders. Forty to fifty percent of these individuals are "dually diagnosed" - suffering from addiction to alcohol and/or drugs as well.²

Ultimately, the condition labeled "homelessness" is best described as a state of "disaffiliation" or complete alienation from meaningful human relationships and the social support systems most people have working for them. Most homeless people are

either addicts themselves, or are the products of dysfunctional

families and broken homes that were significantly impacted by addiction. These are root problems and, unless they are adequately addressed, any other help we provide will not be effective. While millions of dollars may be spent on education, housing and employment for the homeless, these efforts do little to improve their lots if they are unable to stay sober by working through the very same recovery issues that many of us are dealing with in our own lives.

Sadly, while these problems are on the rise, the resources that are available are usually priced beyond what those who need help the most can afford! Between 1978 and 1984 there was a 17% decrease in treatment beds for the indigent (those without insurance or funds to pay for care). According to recent congressional figures, only 12.5% of the nation's 6.5 million drug users have access to publicly funded treatment.³

Christian Recovery & Homelessness

Is it possible that what we call the "Christian Recovery Movement" could be helpful in solving this problem? Recovery in the Christian community is still largely a phenomenon of the middle class. Most Christian support groups meet in predominantly white suburban churches, usually outside the reach of inner city people who could greatly benefit from them. Additionally, almost all of the Christian self-help literature is written with a cultural and educational bias aimed at this social strata. There are, however, some encouraging signs.

Rethinking Rescue Missions

For many people, the stereotype of the "rescue mission" or "gospel mission" is that it is a place where middle-aged alcoholics gather for a sermon, a bowl of soup and a semi-clean place to "crash" for the night. But things have changed since most people took a close look at a "rescue mission". The types of people who now look to inner city missions for help have changed dramatically. They are younger men and women and entire families, with deeper problems in their lives than ever before. Many rescue missions are responding by developing some very progressive

and effective programs. Comprehensive recovery-oriented programs, using the Twelve Steps and other treatment strategies are now operating to help these homeless men and women lead healthy, stable lives.

Just how effective "Christian recovery" can be is powerfully illustrated in a study of recovery from homelessness conducted by SRI Gallup for a rescue mission in Knoxville, TN. This study, conducted by a secular research organization, had no thought of "Christian recovery" principles factored into it. They identified six critical "life themes" that were strongly present in the lives of people who were able to recover from homelessness.⁴ Interestingly enough, these "life themes" clearly reverberate through the Twelve Steps. The following are listed according to their degree of importance:

Spirituality - as a source of personal strength and as the basis for rebuilding relationships with other people.

Self-insight - by overcoming denial, acceptance leads to a new and accurate knowledge of oneself.

Security - feeling safe both physically and emotionally

Self-awareness - being in touch with one's own emotions.

People support - having others who care enough to be truly involved with one's life (the total opposite of 'disaffiliation')

Suppression - being reconciled with one's past and able to reject negative thoughts, worries and a poor self-concept.

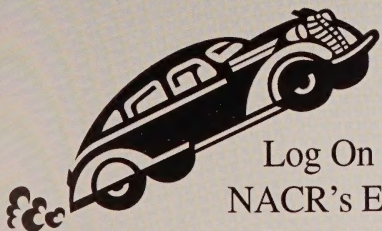
The movement to bring Christian recovery to the homeless is still

very much in its infancy. Countless gratifying "12th Step" opportunities exist at inner city missions for Christians in recovery who are willing to transcend their cultural "comfort zones." Rescue missions throughout the nation are in desperate need of staff members and volunteers who understand recovery and can share it with others. If you would like to become involved, write the International Union of Gospel Missions for more information at 1045 Swift St., Kansas City, MO 64116 or call 800-624-5156.

1. "Mental Illness and Substance Abuse in the Contemporary Homeless Population," Paper submitted at the Professional Symposium, Recent Findings and New Approaches to the Treatment of Mental Illness and Substance Abuse, Pamela J. Fischer and William Breakley, Tulsa, OK 1988.
2. *A Nation in Denial*, Alice Baum and Donald Burnes. Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1993
3. Baum and Burnes
4. "Rescue Ministries of Knoxville, Tennessee: Recovery Study, Summary of Research", SRI Gallup, Lincoln, Nebraska, July 1992.

Michael Liimatta has served as Director of Education for the International Union of Gospel Missions, an association of over 250 rescue missions and other urban ministries since 1990. He spent over ten years as founding director of New Creation Center, a licensed Christ-centered residential drug and alcohol treatment facility, serving primarily indigent men. Last year the IUGM published his manual, *A Guide to Effective Rescue Mission Recovery Programs*, which is now being used by over 100 inner city ministries throughout the world.

Take a Cruise on the Information Highway



Log On to the
NACR's Electronic
Bulletin Board

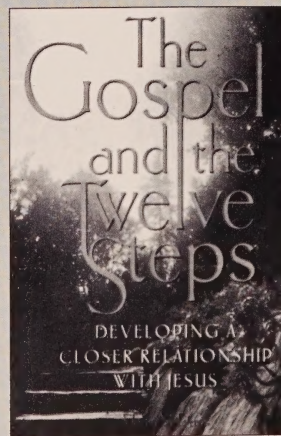
The NACR's 24-hr Electronic Bulletin Board has begun operations. What you will find: on-line discussion groups on a variety of recovery themes, Electronic-Mail facilities, resource lists and much more. Internet access is in the works.

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*"The program of recovery, known as the
Twelve Steps and the principles embodied in
Christianity are identical ways of living"*

Martin M. Davis

Continued from Page 14

person's eye until after we first removed the plank from our own (Matt. 7:5).

Working other's programs of recovery happens when we involve ourselves in deciding how, when and what they should change rather than allowing God to make everything appropriate in His time. The danger is that we set ourselves up as the higher power, which we are not. And a spirit of judgment and condemnation may come into play, which discourages others from becoming responsible for themselves.

♦ *To be safe for one another, group members follow the established format, guidelines, traditions and principles.* The format determines what takes place in a group meeting and provides an order to follow. The guidelines determine how things are shared in the meeting and the group's response to what is shared. The traditions protect the general purpose and the overall health, balance, and well-being of the group. The principles guide the group in dealing with specific situations that may affect the group and its functioning. All of these together create structured boundaries that protect the group and its members from anything detrimental or destructive.

Safety provides the atmosphere for change. It is safe when group members simply share experience, strength and hope. Others in the group can then take what they need from what is shared as God's Holy Spirit shows them the truth. It takes more than safety to have a healthy support group, of course, but safety is a starting point.

Adapted from *The Complete Handbook for Recovery Ministry in the Church*, Bill Morris (Thomas Nelson, 1993) Used with permission

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Growth

You can help the NACR grow to maturity!

Like recovery, always one day at a time,
the NACR grows one member at a time.

Did you know that most current NACR members first heard about the NACR from another member? You are the NACR's most important representative!

We don't have the financial resources for a large marketing campaign. And, even if we did, we still think that *YOU* are the most important resource we could possibly have! Please help the NACR grow to maturity - share this copy of STEPS with a friend and encourage them to join the NACR today.

We would be grateful and you would be helping us to build a national network that understands the unique needs of Christians in recovery!

The National Association For

Christian Recovery



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